

▶ (Top)  
A brainstorming session for team Moments.

(Upper middle)  
Purina representatives watch a student presentation.

(Lower middle)  
Students explored the competition's products.

(Bottom)  
Faculty members Gerardo Herrera, Sherry Hoffman and Candice-Leigh Baumgardner.

# in the studio

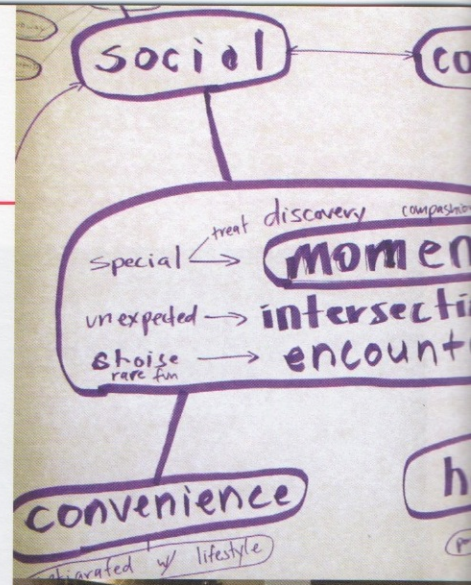
by *Mike Winder*

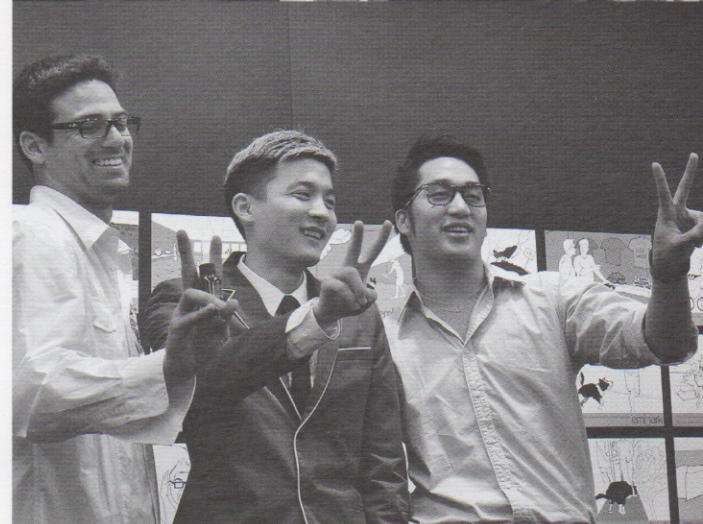
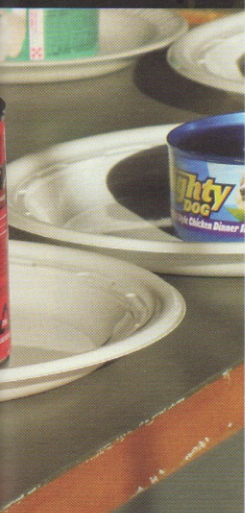
Last spring, Art Center hosted *Purina Remix*, a transdisciplinary studio sponsored by the Nestlé Purina PetCare Company. For 13 weeks, 15 students from five different majors met each week at South Campus to create Purina's new "it" brand for Generation Y pet owners.

Led by instructors Candice-Leigh Baumgardner, Gerardo Herrera and Sherry Hoffman, the students were split into four teams and charged with developing a new brand that considered every aspect of the consumer experience—from the food itself to packaging, merchandise, retail and its leverage of digital and social media.

As is the case with all Art Center industry-sponsored studios, Nestlé Purina had the opportunity to purchase students' final work, and one concept was purchased.

In the end, all of the teams' solutions were innovative and tackled the challenge from a variety of angles. We sat down with the students prior to their final presentations to hear their thoughts on working with students from other majors, the pressures of sponsored projects and what makes Gen Y tick.





# The Teams

*top to bottom*

**01**  
**Real**  
(L→R)  
[Carolina Hernandez](#)  
Product Design  
[Chiyo Benigno](#)  
Product Design  
[Michelle Han](#)  
Graphic Design  
[Tyler Kandel](#) PHOT 11  
Photography and Imaging

**02**  
**Embark**  
(L→R)  
[Ryan Mullin](#) GRPH 11  
Graphic Design  
[Justin Wang](#)  
Advertising  
[Jason Sun](#)  
Product Design

**03**  
**7th & Madison**  
(L→R)  
[Adam Bordow](#)  
Photography and Imaging  
[Kenji Huang](#)  
Product Design  
[Lilly Grigorian](#)  
Advertising  
[Lily Hu](#)  
Graphic Design

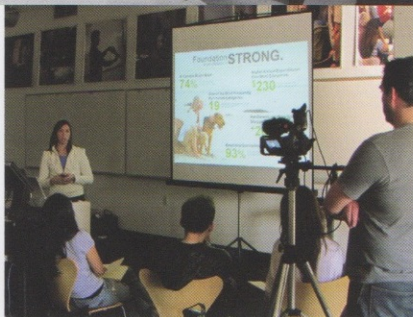
**04**  
**Moments**  
(L→R)  
[Cameron Youds](#)  
Environmental Design  
[Todd Martin](#) PHOT 11  
Photography and Imaging  
[Chiao-Ying Wen](#)  
Product Design  
[Shanti Shiue](#)  
Graphic Design

# 01

## Project Kickoff week 01



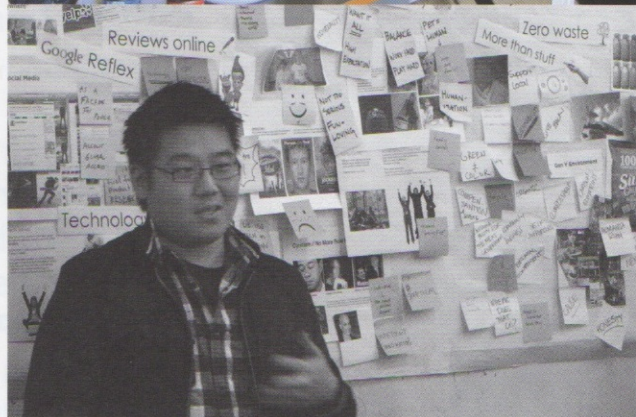
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# 02

## Research & Discovery weeks 01—03

◀▶ Students were split into four teams and spent the first month brainstorming, researching and presenting their initial findings to Purina.



### Team Embark

Living with a pet is a journey filled with countless choices, and poor choices can break the bond between pets and their caretakers. To nurture lasting bonds, team Embark created an experience in which pet owners receive information through social media outlets inviting them to bring their pets to a grass-filled “urban oasis” pop-up retail shop. At the Embark shop, customers can play with their pets, package customizable food and get advice on everything from physical activity to potty training.

◀ *“There’s a thrill to working with an actual client. There’s extra pressure to get everything right by the end of 13 weeks. That’s the most challenging part, but it’s also the most enjoyable part.”*

Jason Sun  
Team Embark

### Team Moments

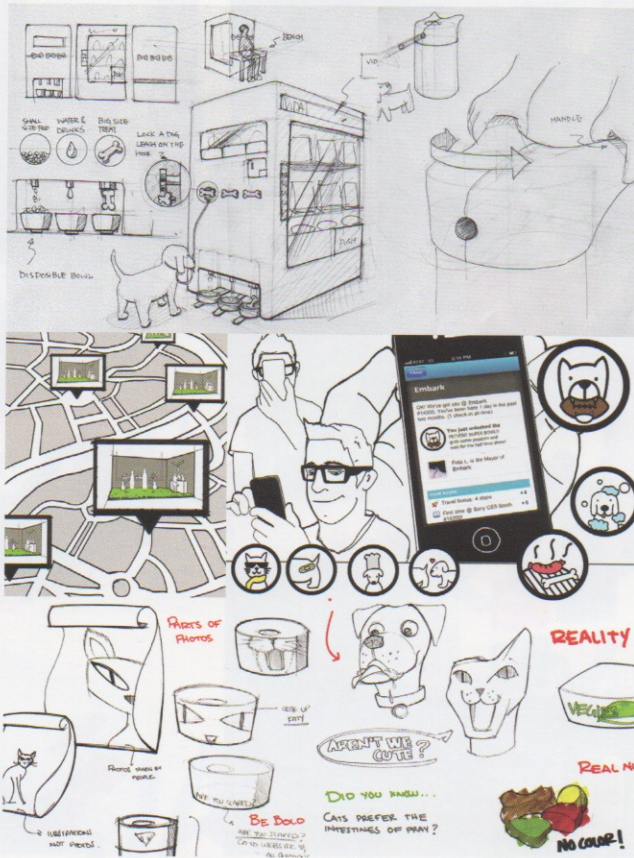
Team Moments believed both pets and their caretakers wish they could spend more time with one another. To turn this into a reality, they proposed transforming meals into special moments. They created a variety of small treats that could be shared throughout the day—fancy a chamomile chicken Jell-O “night cap” before bedtime? And, in lieu of spending money on Super Bowl ads, they proposed building modular, interactive urban dog parks for customers to enjoy.

# 03

## Opportunity Definition

weeks 04—06

▶ The teams next explored unique brand experiences, from Moments' kiosk and snack shooter (top), Embark's social media-driven pop-up retail stores (middle), to Real's street art-inspired visuals (bottom).



◀ *“Purina wanted us to take a stand and go strongly in one direction. They really liked our idea of moments that strengthen the bond between you and your pet. So we said, ‘Okay, let’s run with that and take it as far as we can go.’”*

Cameron Youds  
Team Moments

# 04

## Midterm & Refinement

weeks 07—12

▶ For the midterm, the teams transformed a portion of the studio to showcase their product ecosystems, advertising campaigns and overall brand strategy.



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### Team Real

Team Real asserted they “believe in the real:” real food, real cats, real dogs, real issues and real causes. They created a bold visual language, inspired by street art, that revolved around playful black-and-white photographs of everyday pets. The team also proposed Purina tackle the issue of pet obesity by offering individually-packaged single servings and that the company create an online points system for customers to see how their purchases contribute to a variety of social causes.

◀ *“At the end of the day, we want you to visually like our brand. That’s part of Gen Y, we respond to things visually. Computers aren’t about writing code anymore. If we see an icon, we can touch it. That’s how we approach things.”*

Tyler Kandel  
Team Real

# 05

## Final Review week 13

▶ During the final, each team presented to Purina their products and services, from Embark's customizable servings (left), to Moments' modular dog park (middle), to Real's single-portion containers addressing pet obesity (right).

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### Team 7th & Madison

Purina was so impressed with team 7th & Madison's take on Gen Y pet food that they purchased their project outright. This was great news for both Purina and for the students who worked hard for 13 weeks to create a sellable brand. The only downside? Details about their deliverables are all now kept safely under lock and key. Suffice it to say, the team's project ventured into unfamiliar territory and is unlike anything currently on grocery shelves.

◀ *"The biggest challenge is the process of elimination. We have to find what works best within our brand. If it doesn't work, even if it's a great idea, we have to say 'no.'"*

Adam Bordow  
Team 7th & Madison